



# Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman  
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<http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch>

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## H.R. 1 Education Reform Means Extra Help for Rural Schools

The final education reform bill proposed by House-Senate conference leaders would provide rural school districts with increased flexibility and funding to enhance academic achievement. Each year, many rural school districts forgo federal funding because there are many strings attached that don't take into account the unique needs of rural students. These schools often have considerably fewer resources than larger school districts.

The proposal put forth by conference leaders would also authorize \$300 million for FY 2002 for two initiatives to address the unique problems associated with the education of students in rural school districts. The first initiative, sponsored by Rep. Tom Osborne (R-NE), would allow eligible local school districts to combine funding under various formula grant programs to support local or statewide education reform efforts to improve student achievement. Eligible school districts could use funds for virtually any activity, including educational technology, professional development, technical assistance, and teacher recruitment and retention.

The second initiative, sponsored by Rep. Van Hilleary (R-TN), would authorize grants to rural schools in which 20 percent of students live at or below the poverty level. The program is flexible and funds can be used for teacher recruitment, salaries and retention, teacher training, educational technology, and for academic enrichment programs.

Congress must ensure that students in rural areas have equal educational opportunities, and the H.R. 1 conference proposal would take important steps toward that objective.

### Message of the Day

**Congress must ensure that students in rural areas have equal educational opportunities.**

- ❑ *The conference proposal would provide greater fairness for rural school districts by giving local school officials greater say in how federal funds are used.*
- ❑ *The proposal would provide rural school districts with increased flexibility and funding to enhance academic achievement, in an effort to address the unique needs of districts that cannot compete for federal education grants because they do not have adequate resources.*

### DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- Under the H.R. 1 conference proposal, a school that has failed for five consecutive years must undergo major restructuring ("alternative governance"). This can include such actions as state takeover, reopening the school as a charter school, takeover by a private contractor, or replacing all (or most) of the school staff.
- Because these actions may prove difficult for some rural districts to take, the H.R. 1 conference report would allow a district the flexibility to implement another alternative governance action that is as rigorous as the other requirement and that has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress.
- The Education Secretary would help districts that request assistance in implementing an alternative governance action.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"Every child deserves an equal opportunity in education. Rural schools do a great job with what they have, but it is often done with considerably fewer resources than larger districts. It is our job to be sure all our children get a place at life's starting line, no matter what their zip code or parents' bank balance." -- Rep. Van Hilleary (R-TN), May 9, 2001*